

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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65

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 INR-07 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 /041 W

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R 050848Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1887

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

CINCPACREPPHIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1857

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF U.S. NAVY PORT VISIT

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: COMUSNAVPHIL 040615Z FEB (NOTAL)

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT, AMBASSADOR FELIPE MABILANGAN, JR., CALLED THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR FEBRUARY 4 TO EXPRESS CONCERN ON BEHALF OF ROMULO THAT A U.S. NAVY VESSEL WAS PROMINENTLY BERTHED IN THE PORT OF MANILA DURING THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE GROUP OF 77. MABILANGAN, CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE, ASKED THAT THE VESSEL BE MOVED OUT AT LEAST "15 KILOMETERS BEYOND THE BREAKWATER" UNTIL THE GROUP OF 77 MEETING CONCLUDED FEBRUARY 6. WE ADVISED MABILANGAN THAT THE VESSEL (THE HELICOPTER CARRIER USS NEW ORLEANS) WAS ALREADY SCHEDULED TO DEPART THE FOLLOWING MORNING, FEBRUARY 5. MABILANGAN WAS RELIEVED BUT OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSED THAT IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO RAISE THE SUBJECT.

2. WHAT WE DID NOT TELL MABILANGAN WAS THAT A DESTROYER ESCORT (DE) WAS SCHEDULED TO VISIT MANILA FEBRUARY 5 THROUGH 8, MOVING INTO THE BERTHING SLOT VACATED BY THE NEW ORLEANS. TO AVOID ANY FURTHER PROBLEMS, WE QUIETLY DI-
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RECTED THROUGH NAVY CHANNELS THAT THE VISIT OF THE DE (THE

USS MARVIN SHIELDS) BE CANCELLED. THIS WAS EASILY DONE WITHOUT RAISING ANY RIPPLES LOCALLY. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR SUCH PORT CALLS TO BE CANCELLED FOR UNSPECIFIED OPERATIONAL REASONS. WE DOUBT THAT MABILANGAN OR ANYONE ELSE OF SIGNIFICANCE IN THE GOP IS EVEN AWARE THAT THE DE HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO CALL.

3. WE BELIVE THAT THIS LITTLE AFFAIR PROBABLY TRACES TO FOREING SECRETARY ROMULO WHO HAS BEEN TOTALLY IMMERSSED IN GROUP OF 77 ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST WEEK AND IS PRESIDENT OF CURRENT SESSION. IT IS LIKELY THAT EITHER HE SAW THE VESSEL AT ITS HIGHLY VISIBLE PIER POSITION OR ONE OF THE DELEGATES ASKED OR CHIDED HIM ABOUT IT.

4. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT EXAGGERATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INCIDENT. IT SERVES ONLY AS A REMINDER THAT WE MUST REMAIN VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE GOP'S CONCERN FOR ITS IMAGE IN THIRD WORLD CIRCLES WE PLAN TO ON IN-HOUSE BASIS TO SCREEN MORE CAREFULLY OUR SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED SHIP VISITS AGAINST THE GOP SOCIAL CALENDAR INVIEW SENSITIVITIES DISPLAYED BY GOP. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE VISIT OF THE NEW ORLEANS WAS ROUTINELY SCHEDULED SIX MONTHS AGO, WELL BEFORE THE DATE FOR THE GROUP OF 77 MEETING WAS FIXED.
SULLIVAN

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